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RECORDS
OF THE
Church of England in Rawdon,
FROM
ITS ORIGIN UNTIL THE PRESENT DATE.

BY
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HALIFAX, N. S.
PRINTED BY JAMES BOWES AND SONS.
1858.



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RECORDS

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN RAWDON.

MOST of the townships, into which the Counties of Nova Scotia are subdivided, were originally tracts of land granted to Companies or Associations for the purpose of settlement. Rawdon, which is situated in Hants, and lies between Douglas and Newport, was laid out on the 3rd of August, 1783. The first inhabitants were Loyalists from the Carolinas, who had served under Lord Rawdon in the Southern colonies, and who called it by its present name in honor of their General. The land is good and capable of producing excellent crops, but the want of marsh and intervale in any quantity forms a serious drawback to the agricultural prosperity of the District. Without navigable rivers, and lacking the rich alluvial deposits of the waters connected with the Basin of Minas, the settlers can scarcely compete with their more favoured neighbours of Windſor,

Newport and Douglas. Notwithstanding these disadvantages many have succeeded in obtaining a comfortable support from the products of the soil, and some have even accumulated wealth.

The first notice of Rawdon as a mission of the Church of England was on the occasion of its being united with Douglas and Newport in the year 1794. The latter place had for some time enjoyed the services of a Missionary, but the Bishop deemed it expedient to unite these three places, as it enabled him to impart the ministrations of religion to a portion of the country in a spiritually destitute condition, and to make a better arrangement for the several clergymen engaged in this and the adjoining county. At the date just given (1794) the Reverend George Pidgeon, a young man lately ordained, was entrusted with the care of this newly created sphere of labor, who reported, upon his appointment, that the inhabitants of Rawdon were two hundred and seventy in number, and that the church, which was erected at a cost of £102, would be fit for use in the following summer. Mr. Pidgeon did not continue long in this place, but after the lapse of a year or a little less was removed to Fredericton in the Province of New Brunswick.

The mission continued vacant until the arrival of the Reverend William Colsell King, who was sent out by the Society P.G.F.P. in the year 1797. His initiation into missionary life was not of a cheering character; he had a tedious voyage, "having been tossed upon the ocean for nine weeks and three days, before he had the happiness of setting foot on ground."

As Newport was now disconnected from the mission, which was designated by the Gospel Propagation Society as that of "Rawdon and Douglas," some account of this latter township is necessary. "It is bounded," says Haliburton, "on the North and East by Colchester Bay and the Shubenacadie River, on the South by Halifax, and on the West by Rawdon and Newport. It is one of the finest townships in the Province; embracing a great quantity of excellent marsh, intervale and upland, and abounding with lime, gypsum, coal, slate and freestone. Noel, which was originally settled by the French, is situated on the borders of Colchester Bay; and after the expulsion of the Acadians, was granted to emigrants from the North of Ireland. The upland in this neighborhood, and from thence to the Shubenacadie, is of a good quality; but the marshes, which are extensive, are by no means equal to

those at the mouth of the river. Nothing can exceed the fertility of all that tract of country that adjoins this noble stream: the dyke lands are extensive, and in fruitfulness are alone equalled by those near Windsor, and the upland is uniformly good. Douglas also contains the Kennetcoot, the Five Mile River, Nine Mile River, and the Gore settlements; all which were comprised in a grant of 105,000 acres, made to Lieut. Col. Small, in the year 1784, for the location of the 2nd battalion of the 84th Regiment. The Kennetcoot Settlement lies on a river of that name, which is about eighteen miles in extent, but is not navigable at this place. The upland here is indifferent, and the intervale was the principal attraction to the first inhabitants, who were Americans that had enlisted in the 84th while stationed on Long Island."

Haliburton's History of Nova Scotia from which the above is quoted was published in the year 1829, and the Report of the Society P. G. F. P. from which the following extract is made was published in 1798. A comparison of them is interesting. "Mr. King, after resting himself a few days in the hospitable mansion of Mr. Stanser at Halifax, took a journey of ninety miles to Aylesford, to pay his respects to the Bishop of

Nova Scotia, to exhibit his credentials from the Society and to receive the Bishop's advice and directions, previously to his proceeding to the mission of Rawdon and Douglas, to which the Society had appointed him, and whither he went without loss of time. In a letter of the 20th of December last he has given the Society a very circumstantial account of the kind reception he met with and of the state of those places.

It appears that the township of Rawdon is a wilderness about 15 miles square and is distant nearly 40 miles North-west from Halifax. The settlers—about 42 families—are mostly from the Southern States, with a small proportion of Europeans who lie scattered from half a mile to four miles from each other. In the centre is a neat little church lately erected at the expense of Government. Douglas adjoins it and is a still more dreary wilderness about 30 miles square, and contains the distinct Settlements of Noel, Shubenacadie, the Five Mile River, the Nine Mile River and the Upper and Lower Districts of the Kennetcoot. Of these the three last only are attached to the mission, the rest consisting chiefly of seceders from the Kirk of Scotland. The Nine Mile River is a young colony of about thirty highland veterans with their families, who

have willingly stepped forward in establishing the mission—and so also have the Kennetcoot Districts which consist of about thirty-one families of English, Scotch, Irish and American. There is a neat church at the head of the River, 13 miles from Rawdon Church, near to which a house is to be built for the Missionary, towards which the people of both townships have subscribed £120. At present Mr. King boards and lodges in Rawdon at four dollars a week. A glebe is appropriated to each township. He speaks in much commendation of the zeal of the people for the promoting of religion, and of the great liberality which the dissenters of every description have shown on this occasion. And, he adds, though placed in a newly settled country, and subject to many inconveniences naturally arising from that circumstance, and more especially from the present dearness of every article of life, and from the laborious care which a mission, extending nearly 30 miles, through roads the worst that can be imagined, must necessarily require, yet he is happy in the thought that, by a prudent perseverance in his duty, he shall soon see religion firmly established in those promising settlements. He declares himself contented in his situation, and that it shall ever be his study

to fulfil the expectations and merit the approbation of the society."

The township had certainly improved during the lapse of thirty years. The following sentences, from the above extracts, when placed in juxtaposition, appear rather antagonistic.— "Douglas," says Mr. King, "adjoins it (Rawdon) and is a still *more dreary wilderness*." "It is," says Haliburton, "one of the *finest townships* in the Province. *Nothing can exceed the fertility of all that tract of country* that adjoins this noble stream (Shubenacadie)." We must remember, when reading these statements, that a long period of time had passed, during which much labor had been expended in clearing the forest and tilling the soil, and that these widely differing assertions were made by men in widely differing circumstances, the one having just left old England, with its rich luxuriant meadows, its grand and stately edifices, and its densely peopled towns; the other, accustomed from childhood to thinly scattered settlements, humble tenements, and rugged roads through forests. They both contrasted the present with the past: the missionary looked back on the noble country in which he had spent his youth, and all around him then looked drear and solitary; the native of Nova Scotia

recalled the past history of his land, and seeing the evidence of progress and success, every thing wore an aspect at once cheering and full of promise.

Mr. King has himself lived to see vast changes in the Province. He is the oldest missionary in the diocese, and it is not a little remarkable that he has made choice of Douglas as a suitable place for his residence during the summer months; that which, half a century ago, was so "dreary a wilderness" affords him a pleasing retreat in the evening of life.

Mr. King wrote in 1798 that every thing had succeeded to the utmost of his expectations; he preached in general to crowded audiences, and was in the habit of catechising all the children; to facilitate whose instruction he requested the society to establish a school, and to send him a supply of prayer books and small religious tracts. This desire was complied with. During that year he had baptised twenty-three infants and two adults; married two; buried one; and had in his church twenty-six communicants. Animated by the presence and counsel of a resident minister the parishioners united in an effort to build the parsonage spoken of, but changed the proposed site for that on which it stands now, and tracts of

land were provided for a glebe. These formed a partial endowment, and have ever since been of material assistance in supporting the ministry in this township. Indeed, without either house or farm it would have been impossible, as far as we can judge, to have continued the mission.

Thus far we have learned several interesting facts: first, that Rawdon was erected into a mission, in conjunction with Newport and Douglas, in 1794; secondly, that the Rev. George Pidgeon was the first missionary; thirdly, that the church was ready for service the same autumn; fourthly, that the Rev. W. C. King was the second missionary, and appointed in 1797, when Newport was disjoined from the mission; fifthly, that in 1798 a parsonage was building; lastly, that a school was established at the same date.

The books for which Mr. King sent arrived safely in 1799, and in the letter which acknowledges their receipt, he states that the lot of land on which the house was building consisted of 163 acres, situated near the church, and that some portion of it was even then cleared. And a still more important announcement, as regards the work of the minister of the Gospel of Christ, is thus briefly made, "He likes his people, and they have a reciprocal regard for him." In 1801 his notitia

stood thus: Baptisms nine; marriages four; communicants seventeen; when he "had the satisfaction of perceiving that his professional labors, with the blessing of God, had effected a striking and acknowledged reformation of manners." This was much needed, for many had brought with them, from the revolted States, the lawless habits and loose principles engendered by civil war. Inured as soldiers to a thoughtless and reckless course of living during the stormy period of the revolution, they had formed habits and imbibed sentiments which ill accorded with Christianity. The promulgation of Gospel precepts seems to have produced, in some measure, its hallowing influence, and many who were bold in sin, forsook at least its grosser forms, and endeavored to lead new and better lives.

In 1803, the Society P. G. F. P. honored Mr. King's draft for the sum of £100 which they had engaged to give towards the parsonage house, so soon as it should be conveyed in trust to them. This had been effected, with the approval of the bishop, the year previous, and the completion of the whole matter tended to settle the missionary, and render him happy in his situation. His notitia for 1802 stood thus: Baptisms eighteen; marriages three; communicants eighteen.

Shortly after the period when this return was made Rawdon was erected into a Parish. The Order in Council bears date March 4th, 1806, and reads as follows :

“To comprehend all the lands lying and being in the Township of Rawdon, by the name of the Parish of St. Paul, for and during such time as the said Township shall consist of one Parish only.”

After spending ten years in great harmony with his people, Mr. King parted with them in much sorrow. Domestic affliction had visited him in his abode at Rawdon, and he not unwillingly accepted the appointment of Principal of the Academy at Windsor, “a situation which,” he says, “he had repeatedly refused in happier days.” In closing his connection with the mission, he left the house, garden, and glebe in complete order, and returned the Society “his most sincere thanks for many proofs of their attention and kindness, and his prayer to the Almighty was that He might bless their pious zeal, and send a supply of faithful laborers for His service.” With this now aged missionary’s subsequent career many of the leading inhabitants of this and the neighbouring Provinces are acquainted; for to him they are indebted for the sound education

which they received, and which has enabled them to discharge the duties of their various avocations with success to themselves and credit to their instructor.

In the year 1809 the Rev. Dr. Cochran, at the desire of the Bishop, took charge of Rawdon, in connection with his own mission, which at that time comprised Newport and Falmouth. He informs the Society that, though the congregation at Rawdon was numerous, they did not consider themselves members of the Church. No doubt many had attended Divine Service partly out of regard and respect for Mr. King, and partly because no other place of worship was open. After Mr. King's removal, however, a Baptist mission was formed, and, during the winter immediately ensuing, some few seceded from the Church.

On the 28th March, 1809, the church was partially consumed by fire, but was speedily so far repaired, by a subscription of £20, made up by the inhabitants, that Divine Service could be held within its walls.

In the month of September, 1810, a number of persons went from Rawdon to Newport, where the Bishop held a confirmation, and in the same year a subscription list was opened towards the repair of the church, and application made to the

Governor for a grant of public money out of the "Arms fund," which His Excellency had signified his intention of applying towards the completion or repair of churches in those parishes where the people were disposed to erect themselves. The condition being fulfilled the sum of £130 was granted by Sir G. Prevost.

Another change is now made, and in 1814 Dr. Cochran resigned his charge of Rawdon, and the Rev. William Twining having removed from Cape Breton was allowed to choose his own mission, and his choice fell upon Rawdon and Douglas. It fell to Mr. Twining's lot to serve the parish of Newport as some of his predecessors had done. The arduous labor imposed upon him prevented frequent visits to Douglas, for it was impossible faithfully to serve churches and congregations so widely separated. Mr. Twining reports as early as the year 1815 that the parsonage was already beginning to decay, and that the glebe lands had suffered much injury from the tenants in occupation. His notitia for that year contains: Baptisms 33; burials 7; marriages 19.

In 1817 Colonel Smith, of Douglas, presented the Church at Rawdon with a service of Communion plate; and Sir John Sherbrooke, before his removal to Quebec, gave £50 towards the ex-

penses of erecting a steeple. The congregation, under Mr. Twining's ministrations continued to increase, and the ordinances of the Church were more frequented than they had been. The notitia contains: Baptisms 52; marriages 13; burials 7; communicants 46. The large number of baptisms was probably owing to a missionary journey taken during the year upon the recommendation of the Bishop.

The parishes of Douglas and Rawdon were necessarily left during a great portion of the year 1819 without regular service, owing to a very severe illness with which Mr. Twining was afflicted, and which rendered it necessary to remove to Halifax for medical advice. While absent, his mission was occasionally visited from Windsor and Halifax, and thus his congregation was kept together. About this time Mr. Joseph Clarke, who had been qualified at the National School in Halifax, was appointed school-master at Kennetcoot Settlement. In the course of time Mr. Clarke was appointed to the important situation of master of the school in St. George's Parish, Halifax, where for many years he pursued his honorable and useful calling with great success. He had frequently under his charge not less than a hundred boys at once. Out of the

number who were instructed by him in the elements of a thoroughly useful English education, many reflected credit upon their teacher by a subsequent course crowned with success. Mr. Clarke, upon his retirement from the toils and anxiety of teaching, determined to spend the evening of his days at Douglas, and it is pleasing to record that he presented the land on which the church at Five-mile River is erected. Many who knew him will desire that he may long live to enjoy those solemn services in which he publicly joined throughout a long series of years when officiating as Clerk in the Parish of St. George, Halifax.

In the year 1820, Mr. Twining was removed to Liverpool, and the Rev. Gilbert Wiggins, who was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of Quebec, was sent to supply his place. During his short stay the mission appeared to prosper. He took some pains to establish a system of education as well as to promote the spread of christianity among his people. On receiving some books from the Society, for which he had sent immediately upon his appointment, he spared no efforts to circulate them throughout his parish, thus endeavoring to instil a taste for reading, as well as to impart, indirectly, useful information. These gifts from England were always highly valued by the Mis-

sionaries who were fortunate enough to receive them, and tended materially to assist them in the great work of evangelisation. They were each entrusted with the care of a country of vast extent, through which but few roads had been made, and these generally over steep and rugged hills; their churches and their preaching stations were far removed from one another; and the families who attended them were so scattered throughout the broad territory that those who lived at the distance of several miles from a settler's house were hailed with the friendly title of "our neighbours." Under these circumstances books were valuable assistants. They took the preacher's place, to some extent. As he proclaimed the Gospel in some sanctuary or humble room with the living voice, so these announced its glad tidings in the words of those who "being dead yet spake." They were companions of the fireside, and through many a long winter evening the hardy woodman sat before the cheerful fire which ever blazes brightly upon the deep, wide hearths of the house in the wilderness, and forgot the toil and danger of the day as he read and thought of other things. These books are friends of priceless worth. They have many virtues. They change the current of our thoughts and lead away

from the weary monotonies of the day to something new. To the undisciplined mind which, unaided, cannot concentrate itself upon one subject, they are of incalculable value, and form a burning-glass by which wandering thoughts are brought together. Like the iron bands of the railroad track they keep the mental engine on the way and prevent its straying here and there. They teach man that there are other places beside that in which he lives, and other persons besides himself and the small number which compose the circle of his acquaintance. They carry him in spirit to other countries and enable him to converse with the good and the great of his own and other days. They introduce him into palaces and cottages, lead him through deserts and forests, convey him over seas and float him down rivers, point him to works of art and the grander works of nature, tell him of deeds of war and paint for him scenes of peace, show him the products of every clime and teach him that, everywhere and amid all *man* is the noblest work of God. More than all, they can guide by better paths than any which intersect the earth, and point out a better road than those on which the mere citizen of the world travels—the highway to the city of our God.

It is a blessing to the place where the Missionary resides, when these means of usefulness are freely employed by him. When he encourages a taste for reading, and then guides and forms that taste by a wise selection of books, he renders his own work easier. He has minds to teach, and having educated or drawn out the dormant faculties, his teachings from the pulpit find a soil prepared, in so far at least as mental apprehension is concerned. The word of God will only effectually take root in a heart rendered fit by grace, and though no mere human instrumentality will accomplish the desirable end, yet the wise labourer will use all means within his reach to break up the fallow ground, hoping and believing that as he plants and waters God will give the increase.

There was need of books in the mission. At Kennetcoot there was a great lack of the best of all—the inspired volume. Only two Testaments and six Prayer Books were to be found in the whole settlement at the first, or one of the earliest visits of this clergyman; and, although Mr. Clarke's school was in a flourishing condition, and he was rapidly laying the foundation for a more widely extended course of instruction, but few works of a class above the mere elementary were, as yet, circulated. Mr. Wiggins seized the

opportune moment, and fostered the growing interest by lending those which had been generously granted from England.

He also put forth a vigorous effort to establish a National School at Rawdon, and succeeded in obtaining the services of a Mr. Flohr who had been instructed in Halifax by the head master of the large and flourishing institution in that place.

At this time the churches, both at Kennetcoot and Rawdon, were again in need of repair, and it was necessary to obtain means for their restoration. This constant re-building is somewhat difficult to understand. Enormous sums of money were originally expended in the erection of these places of worship, and during the first few years large assistance was rendered in keeping them in good order. It is impossible that justice could have been done in the first instance either in the material or the mode in which it was used. Unhappily those lax views which too generally prevail at the present day in reference to work performed for the Government or the Church were even stronger than now. It was thought no robbery to receive payment for that which was not really done, no deception to give the appearance of completion to that which was scarcely more than half accomplished. The outside show was thought

sufficient, while the work concealed from sight was carelessly and shamefully executed. No other possible reason can be assigned for the premature decay of our churches and parsonages in Nova Scotia; whoever were the builders, whether churchmen or others, a sad want of integrity, a lamentable lack of clear views of right and wrong, are too plainly discernible. The day has come when a better state of things, we trust, prevails, as is testified by the fact that some of the contracts entered into of late years have been faithfully performed.

At the close of 1821, or early in the following year, Mr. Wiggins was removed, and his place filled by the Rev. Henry Hayden, M. A., T. C. D., who took charge on December 13, 1822, and who remained but a short time in charge of the Parish, his mind having become so affected as to render him incapable of discharging his sacred duties with comfort to himself or satisfaction to others. He removed to Halifax and devoted himself to the study of Astronomy of which he was passionately fond.

About the year 1823 the Rev. James C. Cochran was appointed to the vacant mission, but some difficulty prevented his acceptance of the offer, and he was subsequently employed in travelling through

several of the Western Counties, assisting those clergymen who needed help in their extensive sphere of labor. For a year or two Rawdon was served irregularly, and no name appears on the list as Rector until August 13, 1826, when the Rev. J. Jackson, who was not yet permanently stationed by the Bishop, was temporarily appointed. On November 2, of this year, while he was in charge, the Church and burial ground were consecrated, and thirty three persons were confirmed. He officiated at five different places in rotation during his brief stay, at each of which he was met by a congregation of from fifty to eighty persons.

His successor was the Rev. George Morris, whose name appears as the Missionary to Rawdon and Douglas in the report for 1827. After a lapse of two years the venerable Archdeacon Willis made an official tour, when he visited Mr. Morris' mission, and, strange to say, again reports the decayed condition of St. Paul's Church. It does not appear what degree of effort was made by the people to repair it, or whether indeed they made any. Mr. Morris was popular and his counsels were respected, but the long dependent state of the Parish upon bounty from abroad had so injured their proper sense of duty that it is to be feared

the people but feebly responded to the wishes of their missionaries that they should help themselves either in this or other districts. They were kind and attentive to Mr. Morris, who more than reciprocated their attentions by the most open liberality, as well in regard to their temporal wants as their spiritual. There was an excellent Mission Library in his time, which yet remains, and has proved of service to many of his successors who have gathered valuable information from the pages of those old, and for the most part, sound divines, whose works compose it.

The Rev. Thos. Maynard, who for a short time had been officiating at St. George's Church, Halifax, as Curate to Mr. Uniacke, succeeded Mr. Morris in the year 1843. It has been the lot of few men to render themselves more beloved by their people. Indefatigable in visiting and earnest in preaching, his whole flock were strongly and sincerely attached to him. The plain truths of the Gospel, which he enforced from the pulpit, were manifested in his daily walk and conversation. Having set out with the determination of knowing nothing but "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," his ministry was highly valued throughout his parish. As he was constantly spending his time in the houses of his people, reading the

Scriptures or joining with them in prayer, he became intimately acquainted with them, learned their spiritual wants and spared no pains to meet them. Having found the church in a very decayed condition he determined to build a new one. In this laudable desire he met encouragement, and after a short time the edifice was erected upon a new site a few yards removed from the old one, and was consecrated, together with an addition to the burial ground, July 13, 1847. The present church stands almost on the highest part of the long range of the Ardoise Hills. The top of the steeple is supposed to be the most elevated point in Nova Scotia.

After several years of zealous ministration, during which he organised and maintained three Sunday Schools, preached regularly at the stations, and unceasingly visited his parishioners, he determined to accept the mission at Digby, vacant by the resignation of the Rev. W. Bullock. The inhabitants of Rawdon on hearing of his decision entreated him not to leave them; with one consent they begged him to change his mind; but his final arrangements had been made, and late in the autumn of 1847 he bade farewell to the scene of many happy and useful days.

The Rev. Edwin Gilpin, M. A., junr., son of the venerable missionary at Annapolis was requested by the late Bishop to take his place. He did so, and for a few weeks, from the 1st January, 1848, discharged the duties of parochial minister at Rawdon, when he was nominated master of the Halifax Grammar School, just vacant by the resignation of the Rev. J. T. Twining, D. D., son of the clergyman already named in connection with this parish.

The Rev. William Taylor, B. A., whose mathematical talents and learning had procured for him the situation of tutor at King's College, Windsor, was now named as his successor, and on the 27th January, 1848, he took formal possession of the mission. His preaching was esteemed by the members of his church, and he was just becoming settled in his home, and familiar with the mode of discharging his duties, when ill health brought his missionary labors to a close.

The Rev. Charles Bowman, M. A., a graduate of King's College, followed Mr. Taylor, and continues as Rector of the parish. His appointment took place in October, 1855, and his "induction" April 19, 1858. Several changes have occurred of late years as respects the dimensions of the parish.

The Rev. Wm. Stewart was temporarily appointed to assist during the incumbency of Mr. Taylor in those parts of the parish most remote from the residence of the clergyman; and the Bishop assigned Maitland, Walton, and Five-mile River as places most needing his services. This arrangement eventually led to one more permanent. The unwieldy mission was divided; Mr. Bowman retained the township of Rawdon, with a small part of Douglas, and two preaching stations, one on the line between Douglas and Newport, and the other at Upper Rawdon, about seven and a half miles distant from the parish church. To this was added the district of Lakelands or township of Uniacke, containing one church unfinished, and consequently unconsecrated, making an area of about 240 square miles. To the mission of Douglas the Rev. John Randall, M. A., was appointed in 1855, and in March of the present year the limits of the parish of St. Paul's, Rawdon, were defined as follows: "The township of Rawdon and any part of Douglas within seven miles of the parish church."

On the 25th June, 1858, Mr. Bowman resigned the charge of Lakelands, which has been committed to the care of Rev. O. M. Grindon, B. A. This, no doubt, will be a comfort and assistance

to the clergyman at Rawdon, as he has an arduous task to fulfil without this distant chapel. The report for the present year, indeed, shows the necessity for relieving Mr. Bowman of this portion of his spiritual charge, as it briefly states, "Service in the chapel at Lakelands was discontinued during the winter."

With his sphere of labor diminished and brought to a more manageable size, we look forward with hope to the future career of the present missionary. Difficulties, no doubt, will beset him, but the strong man must not weary of the toil of the road. All our missionaries have discomforts and discouragements to bear, but these annually grow less; and certainly the parish of Rawdon in the present year presents a very different aspect from the rough and extensive mission of 1794. As the field is reduced in size, let us pray that what remains may be more faithfully cultivated; that as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, the minister of Christ may diligently break up the fallow ground, and spread broadcast the word of God, which shall bring forth fruit an hundred fold.

